

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled).

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein step (b) comprises
(b1) receiving a plurality of item category selections from the customer, each
item category representing an area of potential interest to the customer;
(b2) displaying information identifying a plurality of sample preference items
representing subclasses in each category; and
(b3) selecting sample preference items based on information received from the
customer.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein step (b3) comprises
receiving a rating from the customer for each displayed sample preference item
and selecting sample preference items based on the received rating.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the consumer
preference test is conducted before a live audience.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the consumer
preference test is conducted individually respondent by respondent with a
plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of
preference items.

6. (Canceled).

- 1 7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the distances are scaled
2 to fall within a predetermined range.
- 1 8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein step (d) comprises
2 displaying the recommended items to the customer under control of the
3 processor.
- 1 9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein step (b) comprises
2 generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on
3 selections made by a customer and on information identifying items
4 recommended in step (d).
- 1 10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein step(b) further
2 comprises generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items by
3 displaying information identifying items recommended in step (d) to a customer,
4 receiving a rating from the customer for each displayed item and using the
5 received ratings to generate the information identifying a plurality of profile
6 sample items.
- 1 11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the preference items are
2 songs.
- 1 12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the preference items are
2 movies.
- 1 13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the preference items are
2 television shows.
- 1 14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the preference items are
2 books.

1 15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the preference items are
2 fashions.

16. (Canceled).

1 17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 35 wherein the profile generator
2 comprises:

3 a category generator that receives a plurality of item category selections
4 from the customer, each item category representing an area of potential interest
5 to the customer;

6 a sample profile item generator that displays information identifying a
7 plurality of sample preference items representing subclasses in each category;
8 and

9 an item thresholding unit that selects sample preference items based on
10 information received from the customer.

1 18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the sample item profile generator
2 comprises an input mechanism for receiving a rating from the customer for each
3 displayed sample preference item and the item thresholding unit selects sample
4 preference items based on the received ratings.

1 19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 35 wherein the consumer
2 preference test is conducted before a live audience.

1 20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 35 wherein the consumer
2 preference test is conducted individually respondent by respondent with a
3 plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of
4 preference items.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the distances are scaled to fall within a predetermined range.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the presentation unit comprises a display that displays the recommended items to the customer.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the profile generator generates information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on selections made by a customer and on information identifying recommended items calculated by the recommendation unit.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the profile generator comprises a display that displays recommendations generated by the recommendation unit to a customer, an input mechanism that receives a rating from the customer for each displayed item and the item thresholding unit selects sample preference items using the received ratings.

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the preference items are songs.

27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the preference items are movies.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the preference items are television shows.

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the preference items are books.

1 30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~36~~ 35 wherein the preference items
2 are fashions.

31.-32. (Canceled).

33. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 36 wherein the consumer preference test is conducted with a plurality of respondents and each respondent rates each of a plurality of preference items.

1 34. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for use in a computer
2 having a processor and a memory for generating recommendations for consumer
3 preference items, comprising:

- 4 (a) creating and maintaining a database in the memory that stores information
5 identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair
6 of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated by first
7 calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a respondent
8 in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and
9 combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in
10 the consumer preference test;
- 11 (b) generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items in the
12 database based on selections made by a customer;
- 13 (c) controlling the processor to scan the database and to select from a
14 collection of consumer preference items including each consumer
15 preference item wherein the stored distance between each profile sample
16 item and ~~a selected~~ that consumer preference item is less than or equal to
17 a predetermined fixed distance; and
- 18 (d) presenting the ~~selected~~ collection of consumer preference items to the
19 customer as a recommendation.

35. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for generating recommendations for consumer preference items, comprising:

- a recommendation database ~~in the memory~~ management system having a database that stores information identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated by first calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a respondent in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in the consumer preference test;
- a profile generator that generates information identifying a plurality of profile sample items based on selections made by a customer;
- a recommendation unit that scans the database and ~~selects~~ forms a collection of consumer preference items including each consumer preference item wherein the stored distance between each profile sample item and a ~~selected that~~ consumer preference item is less than or equal to a predetermined fixed distance; and
- a presentation unit that presents the ~~selected~~ collection of consumer preference items to the customer as a recommendation.

36. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for generating recommendations for consumer preference items, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code thereon, including:

- program code for creating and maintaining a database in the memory that stores information identifying a plurality of preference items and distances between each pair of items, wherein each distance in the database is calculated by first calculating the difference in preference ratings obtained from a respondent in consumer preference test for that pair of preference items and combining calculated preference rating differences for all respondents in the consumer preference test;

program code for generating information identifying a plurality of profile sample items in the database based on selections made by a customer;

program code for controlling the processor to scan the database and to select form a collection of consumer preference items including each consumer preference item wherein the stored distance between each profile sample item and a selected that consumer preference item is less than or equal to a predetermined fixed distance; and

program code for presenting the selected collection of consumer preference items to the customer as a recommendation.

37. (New) The method of claim 34 further comprising:

(e) changing the information identifying a plurality of profile sample items generated in step (b) based on the collection of selected consumer preference items presented to the customer in step (d) and repeating steps (c) and (d) to refine the recommendation.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising means for changing the information identifying a plurality of profile sample items generated by the profile generator based on the collection of selected consumer preference items presented to the customer by the presentation unit and controlling the recommendation unit and the presentation unit to generate and present new recommendations to the customer using the changed information.

39. (New) The computer program product of claim 36 further comprising program code for changing the information identifying a plurality of profile sample items generated by the program code for generating information based on the collection of selected consumer preference items presented to the customer by the program code for presenting and controlling the program code for scanning the database and the program code for presenting the collection of selected items to the customer to select new preference items from the database and present the new selected items to the customer as refined recommendations.